

an enquiry into the Poor Laws and Unemployment. Such an enquiry must, inevitably, become an enquiry into the immense progress of collective social provision, the new Health, Education and other services, on the one hand, and into poverty and its causation, on the other. Inevitably, as, anyhow, provided for, no matter how strong the efforts to avert it, when one of the partners was put on the Commission.

The opportunity made, they knew how to use it and did use it to the full. Mrs Webb, on the Commission, Sidney behind the scenes, threw all their formidable powers and talents into a congenial task. She, as, at this stage, at the very height of her powers. There were very able persons on the Commission, which included among its members Sir Samuel Parnis, of the Local Government Board. Mr F. H. Bentham, an exceedingly experienced Poor Law Guardian, Charles Booth, Professor L. R. Phelps of Oxford, and C. S. Loch, Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society but not one who could compare with her in swiftness of mind, resourcefulness, imagination and that higher kind of unscrupulousness which belongs to nearly every effective, dominant personality. In range and scope of knowledge in intellectual grasp and pounce above all, in drive of will, she surpassed every one of them. She was, moreover, the one member of the Commission who, knowing exactly what she wanted to get out of it, made it her first concern, and never relaxed for an instant. Tirelessly, she was on the

watch, ready
to spring, to take an inch if given an ell With
consummate
skill, she led witnesses on to giving her the
answers she
w^ranted either to support her case or to
discredit their
own Nor was she content \with witnesses she
successfully
insisted that the Commission must organise
special inves-
tigations On any point on which she could not
convince,
coax, or bully the Commission to act, she
set research